

# NEW BEGINNINGS COUNSELING CENTER

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SECTION 820

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June 7, 2011

Ms. Chandra Waller  
Chief Executive Officer  
County of Santa Barbara  
123 E. Anapamu  
Santa Barbara, Ca. 93101

Dear Ms. Waller/Board of Supervisors,

Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to meet with you and discuss New Beginnings' Jail Prevention Program. For the past three years our staff has been going into the County Jail and providing weekly group psycho-educational sessions to better prepare inmates to successfully re-enter the community and not return to the penal system. Our program has achieved some exciting results in reducing recidivism. As I mentioned in the meeting we have recently submitted the names of program participants to the Sheriff to determine the actual recidivism rate of our graduates.

This past week Lieutenant Powell did provide me the results of his study which involved all of the graduates of our program from May, 2008 to January, 2010. We were able to verify the correct names and identification numbers for 38 graduates of the program who actually were released into the community. (Unfortunately, in the early years of the program many participants went from the jail directly into state prison and are not part of this study.) The amount of time that these graduates have been back in the community ranges from 1 to 3 years. All graduates included in this study had been released for at least one year. Of those 38 graduates 19 have not return to jail. To compare, the average recidivism rate per year is 85% meaning that the large majority of people released from jail will return within one year.

It seems that not only have we reduced this number for one year but that people completing this program are able to remain in the community for years beyond that. We have been told that the average yearly cost to care for a jail inmate is \$28,000. Using this cost, our program provides a savings to the county of at least \$364,000 since at minimum 13 people who would have returned to jail at taxpayer expense have been able to maintain themselves in the community.

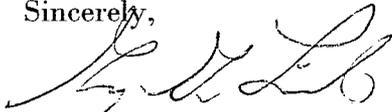
Currently, the program is offered to English and Spanish speaking men. Two groups are provided to honor farm inmates who are being readied for release. Each six week group includes 8-10 members with 4-6 graduating each term. You will recall that this program has been funded for the past year by a grant from the Board of Supervisors and by two private donors that are

Center supporters. It is also noteworthy that this program is now in demand from the women's unit as well.

Given the large savings that this program and the Sheriff's Treatment Program affords to inmates, I want to urge you to continue to allocate funds that bring this kind of return to the County. I am requesting that the County provide funding in the amount of \$25,000 for the coming year so the program can be offered to men and women as well. With this \$25,000 investment and the inclusion of women in the program we believe 150-175 inmates participate and the savings to the system can be enhanced.

I look forward to sharing this information with you during the public comment period in the next few weeks. Thank you for giving this proposal your serious consideration.

Sincerely,



Gary G. Linker, Ph.D  
Director of Community Relations

CC: Board of Supervisors, Sheriff Bill Brown

*\$12,000 awarded in FY 10-11*